

Lately published, Price Two Shillings and Six-pence,

CURSORY REMARKS

UPON

THE REVEREND MR. RAMSAY'S

E S S A Y

ON THE TREATMENT AND CONVERSION OF

AFRICAN SLAVES

IN THE

SUGAR COLONIES.

By JAMES TOBIN, Esq.

Late Member of his Majesty's Council in the Island of Nevis.

Also, by the same Author, Price One Shilling and Six-pence,

A

SHORT REJOINDER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. RAMSAY'S

R E P L Y:

WITH A WORD OR TWO

ON SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF THE SAME
TENDENCY.

A N S W E R,
T O
O B S E R V A T I O N S.

A. N. S. W. E. R.

QUESTIONS.

A N S W E R,
T O
O B S E R V A T I O N S,

Occasioned by the ATTEMPTS made in ENGLAND to effect the ABOLITION:

O F T H E

SLAVE TRADE,

Addressed to the AUTHOR of that Pamphlet,

By a SUGAR PLANTER,

O F T H E

I S L A N D *of* J A M A I C A.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA:

PRINTED BY

THOMAS STRUPAR AND JOSEPH PRESTON

IN HARBOUR-STREET.

1788
M, CC, LXXXVIII.

5.500.22 + $\frac{77}{3}$



0257473250

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

11-10-54

11-10-10

SLAVE TRADE

August 1891 - the JULY 1891 of the Pamphlet

THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

P R E F A C E.

THE writer thinks it unnecessary to trouble the public, or himself, with an apology for the following strictures on a pamphlet lately published. The subject, however important, he should probably remain silent upon, had not that composition tended, in his opinion, to mislead people's minds, and promote the private designs of interested persons, at the expence of justice and humanity. He presumes not to suppose that his ideas shall be implicitly adopted by any person; as on a matter so materially interesting to all, every individual should consult his own judgment, and be regulated by it, after a thorough investigation of the whole.

To the freedom of the press, the public are highly indebted, both for instruction and information. The publication of even errors and mistakes, which

which might exist too long in private, proves generally the means of their suppression, by the returning tide of truth and knowledge in the same channel, and which cannot be resisted.

Should the writer commit any errors or mistakes, from ignorance or hurry, which he is sensible may not be unlikely, he desires not to shelter himself under the sneaking plea of *upright intention*.—Conscious of his own rectitude, he cringes not, even to the public; nay, challenges the severest animadversion; not from a vain conceit of his own ability, but as it may afford him opportunity of acknowledging his faults, where such should appear; his aim being at justice, and that alone his object. He does not pretend, any more than the person he answers, to critical accuracy or propriety of language: Wishing only to be plain, and clearly understood; and having neither leisure or inclination, had he the power, to tickle the fancy, or play on the passions of his fellow-citizens, on so serious an occasion, he leaves with the writers of periodical essays, all the triumph, and all the glory, that a brilliant imagination, or a florid style, can obtain. He thinks it necessary to apprise the public, that the pamphlet he undertakes

takes to answer, though dated so long ago as the 12th of June last, was published but a few days since. The Assembly being to meet on the 29th instant, and convened, it is well known, a month earlier than usual, for the purpose of expressing the people's sentiments on the abolition of the African trade, &c. and to be laid before the British Parliament; the author of that composition, shrewdly supposed, that, by delaying its publication, there would not be time to prepare and publish an answer to it before that meeting; and that, consequently, whatever might be its merits, his purpose would be accomplished. That the writer of these pages cannot make so full and proper an answer to it as he wishes, and thinks he could, had he more time, is certain; and he, therefore, on this account only, hopes the public will, not for his sake but their own, make due allowance for his deficiency both in matter and manner; supplying, from general experience and observation, all that may be wanting.

*Jamaica, Clarendon, }
20th Sept. 1788. }*

T O T H E
A U T H O R, &c.

S I R,



S you have not affixed any name to your performance, but given it to the public to be treated as it should deserve, you still retain the advantage of adopting or rejecting it, as its credit or disgrace may affect you. Standing thus fairly upon its own intrinsic merits, borrowing no respect from your character, whatever that may be, my freedom can give no personal offence, and is therefore unrestrained by ceremony.

Your facts and observations are so strangely jumbled together, that it is impossible to separate them in such a manner as to answer both with precision or regularity; and you have so blended transactions in the other islands with those in this country, however different they are known to be, and necessarily must, from many different circumstances of situation, &c. that, had it been your intention

B

to

to perplex and confound the subject, you could not have done so by any means more effectually. As I cannot then follow you through all the peregrinations of your fancy, or your alternate skips from one island to another, I shall only make such comments upon them as may occasionally occur; and of course leave sufficient matter for Mr. Glanville Sharp and the Dean of Middleham to contest, should they be disposed for a paper war with you. Your preface and observations being exactly of a piece, I take leave to consider them together; seeing no difference but in their names, nor any reason for the distinction.—I now proceed to your preface, page 1.

You declare yourself “ particularly qualified, from a long and intimate knowledge of, and residence at different times in, most of the islands, from Barbados to Jamaica, to lay before the public the real situation and treatment of slaves in the sugar colonies;” and you choose “ to be satisfied, that the account you have given, will be acknowledged by every person acquainted with the West Indies, to be a less favourable representation of the negroes’ situation than the fact would justify.” You proceed also “ to speak only of general treatment and to avoid mentioning the attention which particular people shew their slaves.”—Upon such general ground it is not difficult, and you knew it, to meet you; but like a wary general, you have taken special care to entrench yourself strongly, by making *all* the islands the scene of action; skirmishing in each at discretion, and always securing your retreat from one to another, as the exigency of your arguments might require; well aware what little intercourse there is between this island, now your head-quarters, and the others; and consequently reserving to yourself the power, at any moment, like one of our renowned generals last war in America, of “ shifting your position.”—You profess it “ to have been your original intention to point out the improbability and absurdity, of the accounts given of the planters’ cruelty to their slaves;” but in kindness, or
mercy,

mercy, to the two Universities, &c. "and that you *cannot help* respecting such authorities." You politely admit "some doubts how far you might venture to say any thing in favour of a commerce so generally condemned." To solve these doubts, however, and perhaps to quiet some rising scruples of conscience, you piously resort to the scriptures, "to learn whether slavery was inconsistent with the revealed will of the Deity." Here the result was perfectly satisfactory to yourself!---and then you beneficently proceed "to point out some few, of the many, passages to be found in the sacred volumes, which justify that commerce." Still somewhat sceptical, you rest firmly, at last, upon the *back* of a Mr. Harris of Liverpool, as upon a rock against which all Hell itself cannot prevail! I shall take no share in the controversy on this part of the subject, but leave it with Mr. Harris and yourself to adjust the matter with the English Universities, and the best and most learned men in Europe. For myself only, I can and do decide.---No construction of the Gospel shall ever persuade me to consider the benignant FATHER of all men unjust. If the scriptures then could be made, what I am sure they cannot be tortured into, a justification of slavery, I solemnly declare that I would abjure Christianity, as a system derogatory of the Divinity, and unworthy the adoption of rational beings.---Mr. Harris may contrive to reconcile such doctrine with the interest of Liverpool merchants; and perhaps you may allay the qualms of some planters, over the festive bowl, on the same principle; but you will both find some difficulty, I believe, in making profelytes amongst any other description of men: From your happy turn to *anecdote*, however, miracles may ensue!

Preface, page 4, &c. You seem much disposed to perplex the general ideas formed by British subjects, respecting Slavery; and very civilly doubt their having any knowledge of the matter. If Liberty be the Antipode, or reverse of Slavery, they are certainly not so ignorant as you suppose. They contrive, at least,

to enjoy that liberty. They are restrained, by the noblest system of Government ever formed, from doing mischief ;—bound for their own benefit, and with their own free will and accord ; and ever too *the binders of themselves*. Not so the unfortunate negroes ! Torn from their country, relations and friends !—Fettered in the moment of captivity !—No chance of redemption to the termination of their existence !

Preface, page 5. You say “ the colonies possess not, to any great extent, the privilege of being governed by laws to which they have given their assent by themselves, or their representatives !” And this seems held as an argument in favour of an absolute and uncontrouled dominion over their slaves ; which is no more, at best, than justifying one wrong by another. It remains yet to be proved, that “ their property is to be taken from them, or much lessened in value, if the present attempt should succeed, either in the whole, or in part.”

Your stricture upon the populace of London, as to their cry of *Liberty*, in consequence of Lord Mansfield’s determination in the case of Mr. Stuart’s negro ; and their heats about the *name* of the Protestant religion a few years ago, &c. is now *happily* applied to some whom, you have acknowledged, you *could not help* respecting ; nay, to *all* the people in Great Britain, whose *humanity* you are pleased to satirize ; making them “ more earnest to recommend the exercise of that virtue to the inhabitants of the East and West Indies, than to practise it themselves !” To so general a censure, upon the most enlightened people in the world, I shall remain silent ; too much astonished at your *modesty* to attempt a reply.

As you have asserted that “ the laws of Great Britain authorize slavery in the colonies,” you should have referred to such as do. Were you but half as learned in the laws of the land as in those of the gospel, you would surely have as well fitted some of
the

the one, as of the other, to your purpose: You might, at any rate, have resorted to *precedents*, and safely drawn as many as you pleased from Tobago.

When liberty was announced to negroes, as well as all others in Great Britain, it would indeed have been well if some provision had been made for those wretches; then possessing, so far removed from their country and friends, nothing else!—But there was no robbery in the case, as you have insinuated, respecting their former masters;—no “*sacrifice to the mere names of liberty and humanity.*” The negroes claimed, at last, the benefit of the laws, and they received it, as *their right*. They were told that “every man *there* was as free as the air he breathed!” These were Lord Mansfield’s *words*, which I heard him express; and I believe he understood the laws as well as yourself. Many of the negroes, emancipated by that determination, might have starved; and many more have wandered about the world,—ignorant of European manners and customs;—unhabituated to the climate;—unbred to any profession;—unassisted with the advice of friends;—was it wonderful that they should have pined and mouldered away? Let us suppose some hundreds, or thousands, of Englishmen thrown by shipwreck, or any other misfortune, upon the African coast, and unarmed; what, but the humanity of the natives, could they depend on for sustenance, and other means of preservation? I believe such cases have actually happened; and that their relation may be found in collections of voyages and travels.

Preface, page 7. You assert “that if slaves were set free in the colonies, they would neither work for subsistence, or even choose, though able to pay for their passage, to return to Africa.” The first is contradicted by the fact; for there is not one free negro, who has not means of support independent of labour, that *does not* work for his livelihood. It is absurd to suppose the contrary; as even instinct would impel every animal to seek the means of preservation.

preservation. And as to returning to Africa, you well know the difficulty to be great, and almost insurmountable; there being no *direct* communication from the islands thither, or otherwise than by Great Britain; consequently, *two* long voyages to encounter, and the expence of each, or both, more than almost any negro, and particularly a friendless foreigner, could bear: It would, therefore, be wonderful, if even a *single instance* occurred of a negro finding means to return to his native country. It is but in the circumstance of his being freed, which rarely happens to a foreign negro, that he could think of it; and that very circumstance might well reconcile him to his situation here, where he might hope to avail himself of the further favour and protection of his former master, with whom it may reasonably be supposed he retains some interest. I think you prove, if any thing, more than you intended; by shewing, whatever may be the cause, that free negroes are content to remain in the islands. In the welfare of those islands, and under their present government, they certainly acquire an interest, in being made free; for, as they could not hope for more happiness by any change, they would not hazard that which they possess; and, consequently, would cheerfully unite with the white inhabitants, as they have always done, both to quell insurrections at home, and repel invasions from abroad.

Note, page 7. Your story of the Anamaboa young woman, I should be tempted to call an old woman's tale; but that old women are seldom quite so foolish, even in their *tales*. It tends not at all to prove what you wish to infer from it, "That negroes prefer slavery in the islands to freedom in their own country."—Admitting the fact to be exactly as you have stated it, let it be fairly considered.—The girl could have had little, if any experience of the general severity practised in the treatment of slaves here: Purchased by a lady, with whom she must have had an easy life, as all such attendants on ladies have; and knowing very little

little, from a constant residence in town during her short stay here, how the great majority of slaves are treated in the country, and particularly on sugar plantations, her ideas of slavery must have been superficial!—It does not surely follow, at any rate, that, “in returning to this island, she returned to slavery.” The very reverse appears; her freedom having been purchased by her brother, and her situation free at Anamaboa when Captain Martin conversed with her there!—I fear, Sir, you know as little of women as of men: What was there unnatural, extraordinary, or even uncommon, in a young woman’s wishing to return to an agreeable husband? It only shews, that she possessed, what it is to be hoped is neither unnatural, extraordinary, or uncommon, an honourable portion of conjugal affection and fidelity; and how unjust, and perhaps stupid, those are, who deny to negroes a participation in virtues, which the most polished people hold in the highest respect and veneration.

Preface, page 8. Your idea “of cramming liberty down the throats of people who are incapable of digesting it,” is so truly worthy a *Brobdingnag Monkey*, that it merits not the trouble of a comment.

I admit that the protection, security, and other advantages, received from living in society, give every community a right to abridge the individual of *such portion* of his natural liberty, as may be conducive to the general welfare of the whole; “and that none can have a right to make laws but the members of the community who are to be governed by them.”—If you meant to apply these maxims to the interference of the British Parliament, as to the government of slaves in the West India islands, they may be equally applied to the *rights* of negroes, as British subjects, and human beings. It is not *a portion* of *their* liberty that is sacrificed but *the whole*.—257,300 people, labouring incessantly for 25,000, as in this island, yet not possessed of *any thing* they

they can call their own!—May they not say, “are we not men; are we not your brethren?”

Whilst Great Britain retains the power of making, as well as calling, the West India islands, *her islands*, which she certainly holds at present, and I hope will long continue to hold; as also the exclusive privilege of transporting slaves to those islands in her own ships; she certainly may, at her wisdom and discretion, not only relinquish that branch of her own commerce, but exclude all other nations from entering upon it with her colonies.—The colonists might indeed call it an *hardship*, but that yet remains to be proved; *injustice* it could not, with any propriety, be called; if the mother country is allowed to be the best, as she ought to be the only, judge of what relates to *her own* commerce. If the colonists have really a right to enslave any people, why confine it to those of Africa? Should it not extend equally to Russia, or any other part of the globe: I believe the *right* depends, and ever will, on the favour and acquiescence of Great Britain, who may surely, and I hope will, withdraw both, whenever she finds them repugnant to her honour and humanity; let her interest be what it may, or you choose to represent it.

The Spaniards conceived they had a *right*, merely because they professed Christianity, to enslave the Americans; and to roast their prince, the unfortunate Guatimozin, for an obstinate adherence to his own Deities, and criminal ignorance of the Gospel, which he had never heard of before*. The pious priests denounced death and damnation to the Mexicans and Peruvians, as you do slavery and destruction to the Africans, upon the purest religious principles, founded, like your own, upon the authority of *chapter and verse*, expounded too, as your's, by their own discretion, and which none but a sacrilegious monster durst presume to controvert! What have the Spaniards obtained by the

* *Vide* Abbe Raynal's and Robertson's histories of America.

holy ardour of those zealous ecclesiasticks?—Gold!—Treasures which have nearly destroyed their country, at that time the finest in the world, though now almost a desert. Treasures, however dearly purchased, which they have not been able to retain; and only served to enrich nations with whom they have been often since at enmity:—Treasures for which, in a word, they have sacrificed all honour and reputation; as well as their domestic felicity, as a nation, and as men!—Does not all this, Sir, afford an instructive lesson to other countries? The *present advantage* of the slave trade seems to many persons, full as wise and learned as yourself, problematical at best. None but interested persons; or those who pay court to them, will affirm it to be *indispensably necessary*; and all the powers of sophistry cannot reconcile it with any principle of honour or justice. Were the advantage, however, as generally admitted, as it is disputed, if not denied, should it be purchased at the expence of justice and humanity? Is there not, as Uncle Toby said to the fly, “room enough for us all in this world!” Would you, Sir, if a true Englishman, “for the whistling of a name, damn your country to everlasting fame?” As a Christian, it behoves you to read the bible once more; for your own instruction; to consider very seriously before your departure from this mortal stage, and perhaps you may be *on the point*, whether you have not done some mischief, or, at least, attempted it, by your exposition of the divine law; and that it might, therefore, be very prudent, and perfectly wise too, to make all the atonement in your power, by a public acknowledgment of your errors and transgressions.

Preface, page 11. As you plead *upright intention* in claim of the public indulgence, and in extenuation of errors and mistakes in your composition, should you not in prudence, if not in candour and decency, have admitted, as you have denied, that others have as fair a title as your own to the same indulgence? Those, particularly, who have given *their names* to the world; whilst you lurk in the dark, stabbing their reputations! Whatever may

C

be thought

be thought, as to the subject of dispute, *your conduct* must appear insidious ; and the facts you state, if not your arguments, *questionable indeed!*

Observations, page 1. As I have not seen Mr. Glanville Sharp's pamphlet, respecting the injustice of the slave trade, I submit, to those who have, the propriety of your remarks upon it. You know best how far a *temporary residence* in the other islands could have afforded you *abundant opportunities* of deciding upon the justness of that gentleman's strictures ; and of being "*fully convinced* that he had been most egregiously imposed upon." As you have chosen, however, to be totally silent as to the purport of those strictures, confining yourself to a general censure and condemnation of them all, in the aggregate ; we remain but as wise as before, both as to their demerits, and your purpose, in the introduction of that gentleman's name and character, which have received no injury, however, from general accusation, unsupported by any proof, and without name or character staked against them.

Observ. page 6. You assert, *generally*, as usual, that " several who have lived in the West Indies, now traduce those from whom they received the most hospitable treatment there." You are sure that no one will take the ridiculous trouble of attempting to disprove such an assertion ; and I think you might have been as sure, that little credit would be given to it.—None but a Don Quixote would encounter such a wind-mill ! You sagaciously ask, "*Who are they* who thus presume to emancipate these unfortunate victims of human luxury and avarice ?—*Are they not* men who keep their brethren and fellow citizens in a bondage infinitely more strict and severe ?"—I beseech you, Sir, to answer these questions yourself.—Having professed yourself, at setting out, *particularly qualified* to give us information, it is surely *your business* to do so, and not tease us with silly and impertinent questions.

The

The picture you draw of the soldier's and peasant's situation in England, is much over-charged ; but fiction being allowed to Poets, you are pleased to assume that I cense as a Painter ; and I do not think it worth disputing with you. It does not however follow, that, because soldiers and peasants endure much hardship, negroes should be dragged in chains from their own country, and worked, like cattle, for the rest of their lives. Have not Africans as good a *right* to enslave Englishmen, if they could, as Englishmen to enslave Africans ? Does *power* constitute *right* ? If so, the strongest men should ever hold the weakest in subjection.

Observ. page 7. I admit the *hardship* of impressing seamen, and heartily lament its *necessity*, for such I believe there must subsist, since no expedient has been yet devised in remedy of it ; and that the greatest and wisest men our country ever boasted, even the immortal Lord Chatham, considered it an unavoidable evil, because irremovable without destruction to the whole community. It is the only badge of slavery that remains upon Englishmen ; because men are *forced* to serve, and too often with circumstances of extreme cruelty. It never was attempted to be justified but on, the first and most important principle of human nature, *self-preservation*, in which the seamen themselves, as part of the community, are comprehended. The necessity then, being generally admitted, warrants this only exercise of arbitrary power. To no other case whatever is that exercise to extend, because in no other is it *indispensably necessary*. The necessity of forcing negroes, or any other people, from their country, is certainly neither urgent or extreme ; nor is there any, I am positive, for their ill treatment when brought to these islands, but the reverse, if we understood our interest, or had just ideas of morality. The poor negroes chains should be made as light as possible, if chains they must endure !—Let us, at least, be content with those slaves we have, and learn to treat them better : Let us govern them

them with temper and with reason, and not with passion and folly—In being *just*, we should be *wise*.

Note to Observ. page 9. You mention that “ some (negroes) indeed, *were happily, for themselves*, impelled by hunger and want, to commit crimes which caused their misery to be more speedily terminated by the *card*.” This idea of happiness seems altogether new, and worthy of yourself. *Happily impelled*, by the acute, and no doubt *pleasant*, sensations of hunger and want, to commit crimes for which they were hanged!—If from such a complication of, what are generally considered *evils*—crime, infamy, and misfortune, you can extract *happiness*, there cannot be a doubt of your discovering, when you please, both the philosopher’s stone and the longitude.

Obser. p. 13, 14. There is not, I believe, any charge of inhumanity to the West India gentlemen residing in England, or to the *gentlemen*, in general, in the islands. It is of the agents of the absent proprietors, and their, and all other, *understrappers* that complaints are made, and seldom without reason. Overseers, and book-keepers too, are frequently dismissed for extreme cruelty; and this, alas! is their *only* punishment, which they generally despise. How often do they not elude even this, and how long, from the ignorance, indolence, remissness, or stupidity of their employers!—Can any man, candidly disposed, deny this to be the *fact*? Many indeed do, and will continue, to deny it; and so they would, I fear, their religion and their God, if they had any point to accomplish by so doing. You have somewhere asked, why particular instances of cruelty are not exhibited to public view, and seem to exult because they are not. You know the task would, at best, be invidious; and, you cannot be insensible, that it might be not a little dangerous also. Prosecution for defamation, perhaps assassination, might be the consequences of an indiscreet, though honest zeal. The best men regard too much their quiet, and their safety, to run such hazards,

zards. You express your own ideas *very generally*.—Why will you not allow the same liberty to others? *You may compliment with safety*; but it is not quite so safe to *censure* the conduct of *particular persons*.

Observ. p. 15, 16. You have expended much time in detailing the conduct of English farmers, their treatment of horses and hogs, and their not being *overburthened* with humanity. As I do not perceive how those remarks apply to the planters and their slaves, I shall leave you to all the enjoyment they can afford.

Observ. p. 18, 19. All honour must be allowed the inhabitants of Kingston, as to the Asylum *lately* established there for the reception of old and diseased negroes, basely deserted in the hour of distress and misery, by their inhuman, their truly diabolical masters. It is to be hoped the other towns and parishes will imitate this illustrious example of humanity in the town of Kingston. Whatever may be the result of the questions now in agitation, as to the negroes, they *already* experience some good effects from the general discourse on the subject; and not, as some insinuate, from that incoherent jumble of laws passed here last session. Those were intended as a *specimen* of certain men's profound knowledge in Legislation;—but they have proved the fabricators *to be novices* in the science.

Observ. p. 19. You are just as witty as wise, in sporting an opinion for the West Indians, “That liberty, without the means of subsistence, is scarce worth having.” Allow us, Sir, to judge for ourselves. Many of us are poor, but we all *hope* for amendment in our circumstances. We know that property may be acquired;—but that liberty, once lost, or never enjoyed, seldom can. Whilst free, we can, at worst, shift our quarters; We have the whole world to range in;—perhaps the Africans might receive us kindly, *and do good for evil!*

Observ.

You refer, *generally*, to the colonial laws, as a proof that “the West Indians may be trusted to themselves, the goodness of their hearts, &c. and that their own interest is a *tolerable security* for their conduct.”—You should have pointed out *some* particular laws, and shown that they are generally observed, for our instruction; but you *choose* rather to depend on men’s interest, and goodness of heart, as a tolerable security, and safer ground to stand upon!—You may be right, since the laws, as they stand, are certainly *no security*, and men’s interest, and goodness of heart, *may be some*. Whilst slaves are worked at discretion at any hour, and at all hours, their Overseers please;—in chains too, if they choose;—fed and clothed as they like;—punished to what degree they think proper;—and if *to death*, unless in the presence of one or more white people, the proof impossible; as the evidence of slaves, or even free people of colour, is not admitted against a white person;—whilst, I say, *all this* is the case, a Solon, or a Lycurgus, could form no system of laws for the due protection of slaves, or the punishment of their tyrants. The proprietors of slaves are, generally, *gentlemen*; and, I acknowledge, that charges of cruelty are seldom laid to *their* account. They are, but seldom, however, on their plantations; and when there, the *understrappers* I have already mentioned assume a modest deportment, and *sanctified looks*; opposing with those, and a plausible language, too often with success, the unadorned tale of woe!—uttered with simplicity, and in broken accents!—and in language imperfectly learned, and as imperfectly understood!—I call upon all the *candour*, of all the planters, to vouch the truth of this representation!—Let me not be told, that this but *seldom* happens; if even seldom, it is *too much*!—But if it *sometimes* occurs, within the *knowledge* of almost every man, then it *confessedly happens often*!—and it is, therefore, time to wipe off the reproach. Having expressed thus much as to overseers, I feel myself bound in candour, and in justice, to declare that I know many of a different description, whose conduct

and

and character are in the highest degree meritorious and respectable.—Some of those I have known to express the greatest indignation at the conduct of others in their line ; and to have declined all intercourse and acquaintance with them, as disgracing the station.

Observ. p. 20. At last you come to the great point which you professed to be the object of your composition ;—the *treatment of slaves on sugar plantations* ; and you describe it with just as much candour, as you do the conduct of Mr. Glanville Sharp and the Dean of Middleham. It is *not true* that the negroes *but* are *generally* built either on the most healthy or eligible spots ; but on the *most convenient*, whether healthy or otherwise, and that are unfit for culture, or any other purpose. The nearer the works, (generally situated *low*) those are, certainly the more *convenient*, on every account ; and as water is always a convenience to works, and the want of it very inconvenient, the negroes partake of a convenience, which costs nothing in affording them, where it happens to be, or can be found, for other purposes. Your distinction of *manager*, and *principal overseer*, I do not understand ; we know but of one governor, or commander in chief, of a plantation, simply denominated an *overseer* ; under whose direction are generally one and sometimes two white people, called *book-keepers* ; and sometimes also a third, called a *distiller* ; the number of such people generally depending on the size, and importance, of a plantation. An hospital, as you call it, but usually termed an *hot-house*, almost every plantation affords. It is not worth entering on a dispute with you how far these buildings are *generally* calculated for the purpose of restoring health, or comforting such as labour under infirmity. Certain it is, however, that they are *generally* converted into a sort of *gaols*, and are *generally* so considered too by the slaves, where the confinement, and in stocks placed there, *generally* constitutes a part, and sometimes the whole punishment of every delinquency. *How the prisoners,*

prisoners, and the sick too, are *there* treated, requires a very strict examination indeed! I shall only observe, what is an indisputable fact, speaking *generally*, like yourself, that slaves of all ages and sexes, the sick and sore with the sorry vagabonds, are there huddled indiscriminately together;—and that, independent of the *perfume* at all times, an European could not, at any, remain five minutes in one of those *hospitals*, without being thrown into a profuse perspiration. Whether *such places* can be fit to receive people in raging fevers, the most common disorder of the negroes, however they may agree with the constitutions of those in agues, confined by sores, &c. let the gentlemen of the faculty decide!—I recommend it as a subject more worthy of their's and the public attention, than the paltry regulations of fees, about which they seem at “barbarous civil war.”

Observ. p. 21. You are pleased to call, “the negroes houses or huts, comfortable dwellings, and *palaces*, when compared with the habitations of the labouring people in most parts of England, &c.” You must, I think, have forgotten England altogether, if ever you were there; or suppose that you address people who never saw that happy land, and can swallow your *ipse dixit*, as your expositions of the gospel, with all the veneration due to holy-writ itself!—The only comfort, that I have observed as to negro huts, barely consisted in their being dry, and perhaps warm; but as to *convenience*, I never perceived any, but in those of the drivers, and *head negroes*, as they are commonly called, on plantations. I admit, however, and to avoid frivolous disputation, that, the climate being favourable to those people, as to lodging, there would be little cause of complaint, on that account, had they been well treated in other respects. Were their homes made easy, by kinder treatment in general, they would find more satisfaction in them; and consequently take more trouble than they do to make them commodious.

Observ.

Observ. p. 22. I agree that, in this island, slaves are generally allowed to cultivate as much ground *as they can*; but *how much*, let it be supposed, they *can* cultivate of a Sunday! Working, as much as they can, for their masters, six days in the week; and obliged to work for themselves on the seventh, "Sunday shines no Sabbath day to them!" Some humane proprietors allow their slaves a day in a fortnight, and it is to be hoped that indulgence, at least, may become general.---Should it not be made so by law?—"Some industrious negroes (you have known) to have an acre or two of ground, completely cultivated in plantains, &c. which they sell for a great deal of money." I shall not dispute a fact so little worth disputing, nor comment on your notion of complete cultivation in plantains; and only observe, that your idea of a great deal of money, may reach but to a very small sum. You must surely, Sir, have been in jest, when you asserted that the apparel of any negro, even the best dressed, "would be called proud and extravagant to be appeared in, in England, even at church." Pray be at the trouble, for it is not worth my while, to describe the dresses of the very lowest people in England of a Sunday, and those of the negro *beaus* here;—that we may from the contrast, which would be strong, form a just comparison. Do you place *shoes and stockings* amongst the necessaries of life?—Swift thought they should; but you may know better.

There are no laws *here* which oblige proprietors to feed their slaves, or to regulate their conduct in that respect. There was one enacted last year, to oblige proprietors to plant ground provisions in proportion to their number of slaves; but it regulates not *the distribution* of such provisions.

Observ. p. 23. I can allow you no credit for the *candour* you profess, as it tends only to promote the purpose you hold constantly in view; which is to insinuate, that the slaves, *generally*, abound in provisions, however a scarcity may, at some seasons of the year, happen to occur. The *fact* is, that they very seldom, if ever,

superabund in necessary provisions, as you express ; so that *your hypothesis* remains, according to Johnson's definition of the word, " a system formed upon some principle not proved."

Observ. p. 25. You assert that, on sugar plantations, slaves are allowed as much rum *as they ought to have*. " I presume you meant, if any thing, that they are allowed *none* ; for this is certainly the *fact*, except as to one or two drivers, and perhaps as many *particularly favoured* tradesmen. In extreme wet weather, and when slaves are engaged in the most laborious work, as holeing land, &c. a humane overseer sometimes distributes drams to negroes so employed ; but it is certainly not a general custom, nor ever requested, but as matter of special favour. You are perfectly right, in saying, that the more industrious the slave is, in raising provisions, the better his master is pleased :—the reason of which is obvious—that the master is the less troubled with the wants and complaints of the slave !—I allow that negroes, in the vicinity of the sea, have *some* advantages ;—but how few are these negroes compared with the whole in that situation ! You place the situation of *all* in the most favourable point of view—and then cunningly exclaim, " Is *this* a state of misery, &c. !" *This, Sir, is your candour !*

Observ. p. 26. 27. You dress up a story, of the father of a family in sickness, a doctor and his wife attending him, and his children within call—wine, &c. &c. &c. at his command !—Is *this* common ? Are such circumstances frequent any where ? And have you known them to occur on sugar plantations ?—If not, should you not be ashamed of such misrepresentations ?—If you meant to satirize the planters, you have succeeded ; and they must feel all the force of their *obligation* to you.

Pregnant women are worked, until far advanced in that state, at the hardest labour ; but then at lighter, and to within two or
three

three weeks of their delivery.—The *baby clothes* are the production of your own brain, for they are no where else furnished ; unless to favourite house wenches, with whom you might have seen such in your visits to the nurseries.

Observ. p. 28. Your charge to the gentlemen in the Old Jewry, in “ listening *after* stories of travellers from Africa,” is so truly neat, and elegantly expressed, as to set all criticism at defiance !

Observ. p. 30. 31. I allow that capital punishment, as to slaves, is not common here ; but it is because they are punished at discretion. It is not the *interest* of proprietors that they should be capitally punished ; and the laws are, therefore, and ever will be, evaded by men who have both the framing and execution of them, when clashing with their private interest.

Observ. p. 32. The fidelity which you say the negroes of St. Kitts and Tobago shewed to their masters, when those islands were invaded, proves both the honour and gratitude of those people. Why should such men, any more than yourself, be “ incapable of digesting liberty !”---With them indeed it might remain ;---but with you, it would certainly pass away !---If *this* was your meaning, we are agreed.

Observ. p. 34. 35. Though I do not wish to interfere in the controversy between you and the Dean of Middleham, who seems well qualified to maintain his own part, I venture to affirm in support of his opinion, and I do so upon the foundation of thirty years experience and observation as a planter, that, under proper and what may reasonably be called *humane treatment*, the number of slaves in this island would considerably encrease, without any foreign supplies ; and that from different treatment, and that only, their number has little, if at all, encreased here, notwithstanding the multitude of those imported, for the last twenty years.—Knowing, as I

do, the general prejudice that rages against the talked of abolition of the African trade, and every reform respecting the internal government of the slaves, I am perfectly aware that this opinion will be treated, by many, with contempt and ridicule; and by some, whom I really respect and regard, with dislike, at least.—To settle the matter at once, however, and as I think it may be, to the satisfaction of every man of sense and honour; let all such but examine, or consult their own knowledge and experience, if such they have had, *what* the treatment of slaves has been on all the plantations in their neighbourhood for twenty years past?—Whether there has not been an encrease on some, independent of foreign aids, with but tolerable treatment?—Whether that encrease would not, in all probability, have been greater, had more kindness still been shewn? Whether any decrease has been at all, or remarkable, but where they have been ill-treated?—and whether, upon the whole, this country has benefited any thing, and how much, by any, or what, encrease in produce, during that time, notwithstanding the prodigious sums expended in the purchase of African slaves?—*Here is*, I think, a fair appeal!—I desire only it should be remembered, that I make none but to those who can divest themselves of prejudices, which I fear they have been long imbibing;—and of partialities that private interest, or their ideas of it, may suggest. *I know* the enemies with whom I contend;—that they are the enemies of the whole British empire, and particularly of the West India islands; and that they are *very powerful*. Cemented by one common tie, their *interest*; and having but one string to their arguments, *that* of the planter, which is *always* preferred to *their own*; their notes never vary a tittle;—true to *their key*, as the needle to the pole, they are ever *in unison*! Assisted too by the general passions and prejudices of those they can work upon, I fear they will prove an over-match for the English Universities, &c. whence *no more* can be expected than truth, justice, and liberality.—You, Sir, have taken the
strongest

strongest side, and of course must be right; In all things then, but common sense, I must yield you the palm.

Page 35. I never saw a *well-authenticated* calculation of the cultivated, cultivable, and waste lands of this island. Mr. Long's, though probably the best which has yet appeared, seems to want the support of an *actual survey*; and to be no more than a rough estimate, founded on general opinion, and such as that might have been when he wrote his history of this country, more than twenty years ago. I believe he took more pains than any other person, at his time, or since, to be well informed; and that he was as capable, at least, as any one, to form a just idea of the subject, from general knowledge and sound judgment; but we still remain under the disadvantage of uncertainty, and only possessed of the simple, and little to be depended on, resource of *conjecture*. I cannot guess upon what principle you have formed your's, if on any; and as it differs so much from every other I have heard, I think it must be erroneous. I profess myself incompetent to the task of affording proper information on this subject; and shall therefore presume no further than to follow you into the realm of *conjecture*; building, however, upon my own, instead of your's: The difference in our calculations may, possibly, induce some person better informed than either of us, to explain the matter satisfactorily; and *thus far* our trifling labours may conduce to the public advantage.

I take leave to suppose eight hundred sugar plantations in this island, each of two hundred acres in canes, and as *Acres*.

much in pasture and negro grounds	-	-	-	320,000
More land fit for sugar culture	-	-	-	50,000
Pens	-	-	-	100,000
More land fit for such purposes	-	-	-	50,000
Lands in coffee, cotton, &c. &c. &c.	-	-	-	100,000
More do. fit for do.	-	-	-	100,000
Lands in, and fit for, use in Jamaica	-	-	-	720,000

Sugar plantations, in this island, are considered tolerably well circumstanced, in general, if the whole number of slaves amount to the same number of acres *in canes*, independent of pasture and negro grounds—one third of the cane land, in general, holed and planted annually, by one third of the slaves, which is commonly considered the proportion of good workers:—Pen, or pasture, land when cleared and inclosed, requires but in the proportion of one slave to fifteen acres; and coffee, cotton, and provision land, &c. one slave to five acres. By this calculation then, there should be

		Slaves.
For the land now supposed in canes, with the pastures, &c.	160,000	
For pens now settled	- - - -	7,333
For coffee, cotton, &c. &c. &c.	- - -	20,000
Slaves on the lands now in use	- - -	187,333
More slaves for lands to be settled.		
For 50,000 acres cane land,	50,000	} 73,666
50,000 do. pen or pasture	3,666	
100,000 do. coffee, cotton, &c.	20,000	
Slaves supposed necessary for the lands in, and fit for use, in Jamaica	- - -	260,999

I know it it said, and with truth, that most of the plantations are in want of fresh recruits of slaves; but I likewise know that many of them, being altogether, or nearly, exhausted, and only to be made productive, by the greatest expenditure of money, of what would be no more than a very trifling interest upon it, should be thrown up, and the slaves, stock, utensils, &c. applied to a more profitable soil; I know too, that many others, though fertile, are so inconveniently circumstanced, by distance from the sea, bad roads, want of water, &c. as to be alike unprofitable; and that

that the slaves, &c. upon them should also be otherwise applied. Were the whole number of slaves, &c. employed on half, or two thirds of the plantations already settled, I venture to affirm, that more produce would be reaped than at present; that a vast expence would be thereby saved to the country; and that the slaves, whose labour would not exceed their natural strength, would be much happier than they now are. There are slaves enough already employed on sugar plantations for as many of them as are worth the labour of cultivation. Let those then, whose estates are bad, sell their slaves, &c. &c. or join their forces with the proprietors of good ones. Good sense, or necessity, will induce them to do so at last; and perhaps they are now only prevented from it by cursed mortgages, and other incumbrances, which clog the wretched planters' wheels; whilst they give to those of merchants, agents, lawyers, &c. a rapid, but unnatural, movement. I have not a doubt that, by proper regulation in the management and treatment, of slaves, they would encrease at least a fourth in every twenty years; which would be an abundant resource for all the land that yet remains unsettled. It is also *new found* that cattle might, and do, perform much of the work heretofore assigned to slaves, and execute it better; yet the reluctance shewn to that mode at first, was as strong as the present dislike to the abolition of the slave trade, and every regulation proposed for the better treatment of slaves. Is it not extraordinary that, in above a hundred and thirty years this island has been possessed by Englishmen, the use of the plough should have been almost unknown until within a few years past? Yet such is the fact.

Observ. page 41, &c. I pass over your animadversions, in several pages, on the Dean of Middleham's publication; as well because they refer chiefly to transactions in the other islands, as that, it is more properly his own business, should he think it worth while, to answer what relates particularly to himself. Whether, or not, the slaves in those islands are accustomed to milk, fresh meat, fish, or Irish salt beef, for their ordinary food; I know not; but

but I well know that, except a few herrings sometimes, generally fix only in a fortnight, they never get any such on plantations here, unless when sick, and then depending altogether on the kindness and humanity of the overseer. Slaves are generally worked in rain here, unless very heavy and incessant;—from light showers they are not called in, though wet all over. You have mentioned (Preface, page 1.) “ That it is now not uncommon on sugar estates, in several of the islands, to have a kind of marquees, or tents pitched; or in their stead, thatched sheds erected in different places on the land for the negroes, in case of *hasty* and violent showers, to retire to, &c.” All this may be true, as to the other islands; but we see nothing of the kind here.

Observ. page 46. You mention, that some Moravian clergymen are settled amongst us;—pray where? From your description of their character, we should have heard of them, and the good effects of their pious labours, had they fortunately reached this island; it is to be hoped, at least, that they may *be coming*. We see no missionaries! If “charity covers sins,” I think the Jews have the best claim to *priority* of any people in this country.

Observ. page 47. As you seem disposed to compliment the reverend pastors of the established church here, I wish you had been less restrained, on that account, by your *delicacy*. Those of Middlesex ought surely to have been distinguished by your pen. *Their* holy zeal, temperance, sobriety, and contempt of worldly things, are so pre-eminently conspicuous in their respective parishes, that I am sure you would not have offended the others by an eulogium on their virtues.

Observ. p. 60. Partial too, as perhaps you may think to the very term, *abolition*, where the public good requires it, I do not object to that which you propose, of the patent offices in this island; the fees of which, you say, amount to the enormous sum of 200,000*l.* sterling per annum. But as I do not know, nor believe the people in general think, that it would be strictly just, to
denude

denude the present possessors of offices they have so long quietly possessed ; and which they may consider, therefore, as their properties, whatever might have been the original design of their creation ; it is to be hoped you will kindly take the trouble of revising the Scriptures once more, for the better information of the public on this subject ; as there can be no doubt of your sagacity, if not, in finding ample authority for such abolition, at least in collecting such broken scraps as, with your dexterity, may be dressed into a very favourable *ragout*, and perfectly reconcileable with every palate. You might likewise try your powers of rhetoric, in persuading the Patentees to make a generous sacrifice of private interest to the public welfare ; and be sure of the sanguine support of their substitutes in this country : whose candour and liberality are as generally acknowledged, as their hospitality and urbanity, are universally respected and admired.—Whatever may be the result of your arguments as to these gentlemen, one of them is pre-eminently entitled, in my humble opinion, to the utmost extent of public favour and indulgence. He, alone, has been buffeted about by popular clamour, instigated by faction ; but he has heroically borne the ordeal, and I think will continue to bear it. With *that kind* of candour, however, which you profess, I am forced to acknowledge, that, in one respect, the gentleman I allude to is extremely criminal, and I fear utterly unpardonable---He was born at Boston ! *Could this* be forgiven, I think he would be found to possess as much integrity and, I am sure, as much philanthropy, as dwell in the breast of any one man in Jamaica.

You seem *somewhat tender*, Sir, respecting *Custom-house fees* ; judging perhaps, but I fear partially, of the honour and integrity of all Custom house officers, by those of the present Collector of Kingston. Some of his predecessors have, however, if we credit Mr. Long's history, which you have quoted, descended to the vilest abuses, and the paltriest practices. Of *One* we have heard, but I do not recollect at *what time*, who, meanly disguising himself in

the habiliment of a negro, has watched whole nights upon a wharf, like his brother shark near it, to grasp at such prey, as wretchedness or misfortune should offer !---Happy as we are now, however, in the reverse of scenery and of actors, we remain without even a wish for change ;---and only a *forlorn hope* that, as there is no room for amendment, we may peaceably breathe the pure air which all-bountiful heaven bestows !

Observ. p. 62. You say " that accounts heretofore given by *Governors*, and persons in the highest stations in the North American provinces, turned out erroneous, and to spring from passion or prejudice ; "---and ask, " are *such men* to be attended to ?---Men who either were charged with, or confess the acts of cruelty they accuse others with being guilty of, and who were actually despised and reprobated, &c." Your observation may possibly meet another application, at some future, and perhaps not very distant, period of time.

As you say " that you are *on the point* of leaving these islands, " I shall trouble you no further, but to request, should you be bound for England, you would present my respects to Mr. Glanville Sharp and the Dean of Middleham ;---or if for Africa, that you should carefully conceal from the natives, how much you have been the friend of their country, and countrymen, in the West India Islands.

Wishing you a good voyage, and objecting not to your obtaining of a good pension, if you want it ;

I am, with due respect,

Sir,

Your's, &c. &c. &c.

A SUGAR PLANTER.

a
s
;
-
e
r

y
-
n
n
y
ed
er
ed

s
d
le
ou
ve
est

b-